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AIR INTELLIGENCE INFORMATION REPORT

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1. The following column appeared in the 22 February 57 issue of Yomiuri Japan News:

"Syrian Feeling is Like Dawn of Meiji Era"

"Syria is a country with a population of less than 4,000,000 people.

My Impressions of the country were that its government was pro-Russian and that the Eisenhower Middle Eastern policy had been formulated taking this into account.

I spent four days in Syria and concentrated most of my efforts on trying to clarify these points.

At the time, the president, the premier and the chief of staff were in India and Cairo.

But I was able to meet the vice-president (concurrently defense minister), the finance minister, the vice-chief of the general staff, the commander of the Central Military District and other military leaders.

I also talked to students, people in the street and some farmers.

The conclusion I reached after these talks was that America is too sensitive to communist activities in Syria and is too afraid of the Syrian Communist Party.

The gist of an interview I had with vice-president (who is also speaker of the house) is as follows:

Pro-Russian

Tusji: It seems to me that the nationalist movement in your country is inclined to be pro-Russian - moving away from the US.

Vice-President: Western nations (including the US) are afraid of Arab nations unifying and are adopting policies designed to keep them apart. Furthermore, they chased the Arabs out and created Israel artificially. We must work to overcome these two problems - first to eliminate the cancerous growth of Israel, and secondly to unify the Arab nations.

Tusji: Then why do you quarrel with your brother nation, Iraq? Wasn't it a foolish thing to blow up the pipelines?

Vice-President: There is no antagonism between the peoples of Iraq and Syria. The feeling of the two peoples is the same. But there is definite proof that Britain and America plotted rebellions in Syria by helping the Iraq premier send arms here.

Tusji: In Iraq it was said that the present government of Syria was cultivating friendship with Russia in order to fight Iraq.

Vice-President: Iraq is mistaken. We are not approaching Russia for that reason. For three years we have been asking Britain, France and America to sell us arms in order to defend ourselves against invasion from Israel - all in vain. But they gave arms to Israel unconditionally. Out of necessity we had to buy arms from Russia. We wouldn't have bought them from Russia if Japan would have sold them to us. It is American propaganda - and wrong as well - to say that trade with Russia is the equivalent of becoming communists.

The interview with the vice-premier went along the following lines:

Defense Cost

Tusji: What percentage of your budget is taken by defense expenditures?

Vice-Premier: Fifty-five percent.

Tusji: In Japan, it is only 13 percent. Doesn't it seem a little large for a small country like Syria?

Vice-Premier: It has to be large because we have a strong and aggressive country such as Israel as our neighbor.

Tusji: Aren't there any strings attached to Russian arms, such as having Russian military advisers?

Vice-Premier: Absolutely none. We send people to Czechoslovakia to study and when they have completed their education, they return to Syria. We don't have a single Russian military or technical adviser in this country.

Tusji: When the Suez incident was touched off by the Israeli invasion, Syria mobilized its army and concentrated it along the border. Why was it that it didn't advance into Israel and thus help the Egyptians avoid defeat?

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"Vice-Premier: It was not ordered to advance because of orders from headquarters in Egypt.  
The vice-premier is a very wealthy man, but he talked rather like a socialist sometimes.  
The interview with the economic minister (leftist socialist) went in this way:  
Tsuji: Did you, as the person responsible for the economic development of your country, agree to spend such a large proportion of your budget as 55 percent on defense?  
Economic Minister: It was 35 percent (£12,000,000) last year.  
Tsuji: Are you willing to receive the economic aid mentioned in Eisenhower's statement?  
Economic Minister: Yes, if it is unconditional. But not if there are strings attached to it. There will be no need to increase defense expenditure only in the event that America does not help Israel.  
The next interview was with the finance minister.  
Tsuji: May I mention my respect for the recent decision taken by Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia to give £12,000,000 to Jordan as a replacement for British aid. It is a step toward the unification of the Arab world. Syria, I understand, is going to give £2,500,000. Can you afford this? Or are you going to get it from Russia?  
Same Land  
Finance Minister: Syria does not regard Jordan as a foreign country. We consider that Jordan and Syria are the same. Our thinking is based upon the hope of Arab unification, as well as Syria's own interests.  
And with the vice-chief of staff:  
Tsuji: Why did Syria just stand idly by and watch the Egyptian Army be defeated by the Israelis?  
Vice-Chief: We thought that the Egyptian Army would be able to win on its own. But, anticipating the participation of British and American troops, we stood by.  
The next interview I had was with a man of mystery - Col Saraji. He is now in the news not only in Syria, but all over the world. At present, he serves as chief of the information section. By discovering that the Iraqi Government had given arms to anti-government plotters in Syria, he arrested all the rebels. He has control over the main part of the Syrian Army and is considered a communist by the Americans. He seldom sees newspapermen.  
Tsuji: Your name is very well-known in Japan. You are also considered a central figure in the coup d'etat and even a communist.  
Colonel: Before the war, America and Britain branded anticolonialism as Nazism or facism. Now they are labeling people who are nationally conscious as communists. I don't mix in politics, but devote all my energy to our defense. But they still call me a communist.  
I found it very useful to talk to high government officials and military leaders. But equally worthwhile were the talks I had with students and young people in Syria. Talks with four students, three studying in Damascus, and one at an American-run university, were as follow:  
Conscription  
Tsuji: You have military conscription in your country. As a young man as well as a student, what do you think of this?  
Students: There is nothing extraordinary about the obligation to defend one's country.  
Tsuji: In Iran, they also have the military conscription. But the sons of rich people make excuses and are exempt. Thus, only the sons of poor men become soldiers. Is it the same in Syria?  
Students: We don't know about other countries, but in Syria, the only men exempt are only sons and sick people.  
Tsuji: Which is more important: Nationalism or consciousness of being an Arab?

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"Students: During the days when Syria was under the mandate of France, nationalism was strong. But now that we have our independence, the racial consciousness of the Arab world is growing."

Tsuji: Which country do you prefer: France, America, Britain or Russia?

Students: Whether a country is good or bad depends upon the times. At present, France, Britain and America are the enemies of the Arab world because they are giving help to Israel.

Tsuji: Then you prefer the Soviet Union. But what about the students in Hungary?

Students: The Soviet Union has not done anything wrong in Syria at this time, but is doing wrong in Hungary. If the Soviet should treat Syria in the future as she did Hungary, we, like Hungarian students, would fight it.

Tsuji: (directing the question at the student studying at the American university: What do you think of US Middle Eastern policy?

Student: Those who have studied at the American university are now the leaders of the Arab world. It seems absurd that the Americans are so afraid of communism.

The faces of young Syrians are marked with the courage that shows they will fight for the Arab world to resist the West in aiding Israel. A national feeling similar to that at the dawn of the Meiji Era now exists in Syria."

2. Biographical sketch on Masanobu Tsuji:

"TSUJI, Masanobu (Born in 1902)

He is a former officer of the now extinct Imperial Japanese Army; a politician and ex-member of the House of Representatives (Liberal Democrats). Known as author of several books relative to World War II in which he took part as a staff officer.

Was born in Ishikawa Prefecture. Graduated from the Military Academy in 1938; from the Army Staff College in 1931. Took part in the battle in Shanghai area that occurred that year (as Captain). Later he was appointed Commander of a Company attached to the Military Academy. Then attached to the 2nd Infantry Regiment in Mito (Ibaragi Prefecture); Kwantung Army as a Staff officer; Japanese Army in China, also as a Staff officer. In the War of the Pacific, he took part in the campaigns in Singapore and Guadalcanal, and finally in Thailand. On Aug. 15, 1945, he ran away from the Headquarters of the Japanese Army in the Siamese area, and travelled in the Asiatic Continent and in Japan incognito until the search for the suspected W. P.'s was discontinued. In 1950, he reappeared on the surface of the society and started writing books. In the general election of 1952, he came forward as a candidate for a seat in the Diet, and was returned for Ishikawa Prefecture with the highest mark. Since then, he has been elected an M.P. twice (altogether three times taking into account his first election in 1952). With the advent of the age for rearmament, his opinion is steadily gaining influence on the public. (A few months ago, he resigned his membership in the Diet due to a scandal in which his son was involved.)

Books written by Mr. Tsuji: "One against Fifteen", "3,000 Ri's (about 8,000 miles) Trips incognito", etc.

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Source: Nihon Jimmei Jiden (Who's Who in Japan, Etc.)"

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